

Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (currently amended) A system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information comprising:
3 a connection device connected to an external
4 communication system for connecting said
5 communication system to a survey participant;
6 a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) unit
7 connected to said connection device, wherein
8 said connection ~~Connection~~ device transfers
9 said participant communication connection to
10 said CATI unit when said connection is
11 successful, and further wherein an agent uses
12 said CATI unit to ask said participant manual
13 survey questions;
14 an Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) unit
15 connected to said CATI unit, wherein said CATI
16 agent transfers said participant's
17 communication connection to said IVR unit only
18 if the participant agrees to the transfer for
19 conducting an automated survey utilizing a
20 drill-down survey technique, wherein said IVR
21 unit accepts oral responses from said
22 participant, wherein
23 if the participant does not agree to said transfer,
24 said agent manually surveys the participant
25 using at least some of the same questions from
26 said automated survey; and

27 a database for storing said responses to said manual
28 survey and said automated survey, wherein
29 said drill-down survey technique utilizes one or
30 both of responses already provided by the
31 current survey participant and historical
32 responses provided by other participants to
33 determine a subsequent survey question to be
34 asked of the current survey participant.

1 2. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 1, further
3 comprising: a Computer Telephony Interface (CTI) unit,
4 wherein said CTI unit is connected to said connection
5 device to monitor the status of said connection device,
6 and further wherein said CTI unit is connected to said
7 CATI unit to monitor the status of said CATI unit and
8 said agent using said CATI unit; and still further
9 wherein said CTI unit is connected to said IVR unit to
10 monitor said conducting of said automated survey.

1 3. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 2, wherein said
3 CATI agent asks said participant for permission to allow
4 said IVR unit to conduct said automated survey, and
5 further wherein said IVR unit conducts said automated
6 survey according to a pre-determined survey format if
7 said participant assents, and still further wherein said
8 CATI agent performs said manual survey according to said
9 pre-determined survey format if participant does not
10 assent.

1 4. (currently amended) The system for collecting and

2 presenting survey information of claim 3, wherein said
3 pre-determined survey format uses [[a]] said drill-down
4 survey technique, wherein a following survey question
5 depends on the answer to a previous question.

1 5. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 1, wherein said
3 participant may transfer said communication connection
4 from said IVR unit to said CATI unit by using an oral
5 response, and further wherein said CATI agent then
6 conducts said manual survey at the point on said pre-
7 determined survey format where said transfer from said
8 IVR unit occurred.

1 6. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 5, wherein said
3 conducting of said automated or said manual surveys
4 includes the use of a verbatim, wherein said participant
5 can orally communicate detailed opinions to said IVR unit
6 or said CATI agent, respectively, and further wherein
7 said verbatims are stored in said database.

1 7. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 6, further
3 comprising:

4 a processing unit for converting said stored
5 responses to said surveys into survey
6 information;
7 a presenting unit for presenting said survey
8 information to a consumer.

1 8. (original) The system for collecting and

2 presenting survey information of claim 7, wherein said
3 survey information is derived from a plurality of surveys
4 derived from a plurality of participants, and further
5 wherein said system presents said survey information to
6 said consumer over a computer network, and still further
7 wherein said consumer must be validated before said
8 system will allow the consumer to access said survey
9 information.

1 9. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 8, wherein said
3 survey information is available for presenting to said
4 consumer within 24 hours of the completion of the
5 conducting of said plurality of surveys.

1 10. (currently amended) A system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information comprising:

3 a connection device connected to an external
4 communication system for connecting said
5 communication system to a survey participant;

6 a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) unit
7 connected to said connection device, wherein
8 said connection device transfers said
9 participant communication connection to said
10 CATI unit when said connection is successful,
11 and further wherein an agent uses said CATI
12 unit to ask said participant manual survey
13 questions;

14 an IVR unit connected to said CATI agent, wherein
15 said CATI agent transfers said participant
16 communication connection to said IVR unit for
17 conducting an automated survey, and further

18 wherein said IVR unit accepts oral responses
19 from said participant, and still further
20 wherein said CATI agent asks said participant
21 for permission to allow said IVR unit to
22 conduct said automated survey, and further
23 wherein said IVR unit conducts said automated
24 survey according to a pre-determined survey
25 format if said participant assents, and even
26 further wherein said CATI agent performs said
27 manual survey according to said pre-determined
28 survey format if the participant does not
29 assent, and yet further wherein said
30 participant may transfer said survey interview
31 from said IVR unit to said CATI unit by using
32 an oral response, wherein said CATI agent then
33 conducts said manual survey at the point on
34 said pre-determined survey format where said
35 transfer from said IVR unit occurred;

36 wherein said conducting of said automated or said
37 manual surveys includes the use of a verbatim,
38 wherein said participant can orally communicate
39 detailed opinions to said IVR unit or said CATI
40 agent, respectively, and further wherein said
41 verbatims are stored in said database

42 a Computer Telephony Interface (CTI) unit, wherein
43 said CTI unit is connected to said dialer unit
44 to monitor the status of said connection
45 device, and further wherein said CTI unit is
46 connected to said CATI unit to monitor the
47 status of said CATI unit and said agent using
48 said CATI unit; and still further wherein said
49 CTI unit is connected to said IVR unit to

50 monitor said conducting of said automated
51 survey;
52 a database for storing said responses to said manual
53 and said automated surveys;
54 a processing unit for converting said stored
55 responses to said surveys into survey
56 information, wherein said survey information is
57 derived from a plurality of surveys derived
58 from a plurality of participants, and
59 a presenting unit for presenting said survey
60 information to a consumer, wherein said system
61 presents said survey information to said
62 consumer over a computer network, and still
63 further wherein said consumer must be validated
64 before said system will allow the consumer to
65 access said survey information, and still
66 further wherein said system may limit said
67 access by consumer to an approved subset of
68 said survey information.

1 11. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 10, wherein said
3 survey information is available for presenting to said
4 consumer within 24 hours of the completion of the
5 conducting of said plurality of surveys.

1 12. (currently amended) A system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information comprising:

3 (I) means for selecting a participant from a list
4 of potential participants;

- 5 (II) means for connecting said participant to a
6 survey communication system;
- 7 (III) means for conducting an automated survey
8 interview if said participant assents to an
9 automated survey interview, wherein said
10 conducting is performed by an automated survey
11 unit, and further wherein said automated survey
12 unit accepts oral responses from said
13 participant which are processed using voice
14 recognition into survey data.
- 15 (IV) means for conducting a manual survey interview
16 if said participant does not assent to an
17 automated survey interview, wherein at least a
18 portion of the questions of said manual survey
19 are the same as the questions of said automated
20 survey; and
- 21 (V) means for saving said automated and said manual
22 survey interviews in a database.

1 13. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 12, further
3 comprising:

- 4 (I) means for allowing a participant to orally
5 request that said automated survey interview be
6 transformed into a manual survey interview;
- 7 (II) means for providing a pre-determined interview
8 format, wherein said automated and said manual
9 interviews follow said interview format, and
10 further wherein said manual survey interview
11 continues said pre-determined interview format
12 at the next question of said format when said

13 automated survey interview is transformed into
14 said manual survey interview;

1 14. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 13, further
3 comprising:

4 (I) means for processing said survey interview into
5 survey information;

6 (II) means for presenting approved portions said
7 survey information to a survey consumer,
8 wherein the identity of said consumer must be
9 validated before being presented with said
10 survey information.

1 15. (original) The system for collecting and
2 presenting survey information of claim 14, wherein said
3 survey information is derived from a plurality of surveys
4 of a plurality of participants, and further wherein said
5 survey information is available for presenting to said
6 consumer within 24 hours of the completion of the
7 conducting of said plurality of surveys.

1 16. (currently amended) A process for collecting and
2 presenting survey information comprising the steps of:

3 (I) selecting a participant from a list of
4 potential participants;

5 (II) connecting said participant to a survey
6 communication system;

7 (III) transferring said participant's communication
8 system connection to an automated survey unit

9 only if said participant assents to said
10 transfer;
11 (IV) conducting said survey interview, wherein said
12 conducting is performed by said automated
13 survey unit if the participant assented to said
14 transfer, but said conducting is performed
15 manually if the participant does not assent,
16 and further wherein an automated survey unit
17 accepts oral responses from said participant,
18 said oral responses being processed using voice
19 recognition into survey data;
20 (V) saving said survey interview in a database.

1 17. (original) The process of collecting and
2 presenting survey information as in claim 16, wherein
3 said conducting of said survey interview is performed by
4 providing survey questions to participant using a pre-
5 determined survey procedure utilizing drill-down
6 questioning, wherein a following survey question depends
7 on the answer to a previous question.

1 18. (original) The process of collecting and
2 presenting survey information as in claim 17, further
3 comprising the steps of:

4 (I) processing said survey data into survey
5 information;
6 (II) saving said survey information in a database;
7 (III) presenting said survey information to a
8 consumer.

1 19. (original) The process of collecting and

2 presenting survey information as in claim 16, wherein
3 said transferring of said participant's communication
4 system connection to said automated survey unit occurs
5 only if said survey participant agrees to said transfer,
6 and further wherein said survey interview is conducted
7 manually by an agent if said participant does not agree
8 to said transfer.

1 20. (original) The process of collecting and
2 presenting survey information as in claim 19, wherein
3 said conducting of said survey interview is performed by
4 providing survey questions to said participant using a
5 pre-determined survey question procedure utilizing drill-
6 down questioning for said conducting of both manual and
7 automated surveys, wherein a following survey question
8 depends on the answer to a previous question.

1 21. (original) The process of collecting and
2 presenting survey information as in claim 19, wherein
3 said agent can transfer said participant back to said
4 automated survey unit to continue said survey interview,
5 and further wherein said participant participating in an
6 automated survey can be transferred to said agent by a
7 voice command from said participant.

1 22. (original) The process of collecting and
2 presenting survey information as in claim 21, wherein
3 said conducting of said survey interview is performed by
4 providing survey questions to said participant using a
5 pre-determined survey question procedure utilizing drill-
6 down questioning for said conducting of both manual and
7 automated surveys, wherein a following survey question
8 depends on the answer to a previous question.

1 23. (currently amended) The process of collecting
2 and presenting survey information as in claim 22 ~~19~~,
3 further comprising the steps of:

- 4 (I) processing said survey data into survey
5 information;
- 6 (II) saving said survey information in a database;
- 7 (III) presenting said survey information to a
8 consumer.

1 24. (original) The process of collecting and
2 presenting survey information as in claim 19, further
3 comprising the steps of:

- 4 (I) processing said survey data into survey
5 information;
- 6 (II) saving said survey information in a database;
- 7 (III) presenting said survey information to a
8 consumer.

1 25. (currently amended) A process for collecting and
2 presenting survey information comprising the steps of:

- 3 (I) selecting a participant from a list of
4 potential participants;
- 5 (II) connecting said participant to a survey
6 communication system;
- 7 (III) transferring said participant's communication
8 system connection to an automated survey unit
9 if said survey participant agrees to said
10 transfer, wherein said participant
11 participating in an automated survey can be

12 transferred to said agent by a voice command
13 from said participant, and further, ~~and further~~
14 wherein said survey interview is conducted manually
15 by an agent if said participant does not agree
16 to said transfer,
17 wherein said conducting of said survey interview is
18 performed by providing survey questions to
19 participant using a pre-determined survey
20 procedure utilizing drill-down questioning,
21 wherein a following survey question depends on
22 the answer to a previous question;
23 (IV) conducting said survey interview, wherein said
24 conducting is performed by said automated
25 survey unit or manually, and further wherein
26 said automated survey unit accepts oral
27 responses from said participant, said oral
28 responses being processed using voice
29 recognition into survey data;
30 (V) saving said survey interview in a database.
31 (VI) processing said survey data into survey
32 information;
33 (VII) saving said survey information in a
34 database;
35 (VIII) presenting said survey information to a
36 consumer.

1 26. (currently amended) A process for collecting and
2 presenting survey information comprising the steps of:

3 (I) collecting survey data, said collecting
4 comprising the steps of

- 5 (A) selecting a participant from a list of
6 potential participants, wherein said
7 selecting is done according to specified
8 schedules;
- 9 (B) connecting said participant to a survey
10 communication system, said connecting
11 comprising the steps of:
- 12 (i) attempting to connect with said
13 participant via said survey
14 communication system, said attempting
15 including the steps of:
- 16 (ii) requesting that said participant
17 agree to communicate with an
18 Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR)
19 unit for a survey interview; and
- 20 (iii) collecting call record information,
21 wherein said call record information
22 is stored in a database;

23 and

- 24 (C) conducting said survey interview, wherein
25 said conducting is performed by said IVR
26 unit if said participant agreed to
27 communicate with said IVR unit, and
28 further wherein said conducting is
29 performed by a Computer-Assisted Telephone
30 Interview (CATI) agent if participant did
31 not agree to communicate with said IVR
32 unit, said conducting of said survey
33 interview comprising the steps of:
- 34 (i) asking survey questions of
35 participant using a pre-determined
36 survey question procedure utilizing

drill-down questioning, wherein said survey questions provide sufficient survey data to allow for the creation of survey information; and further wherein survey responses by participant are done orally, and still further wherein said survey data optionally includes voice interviews;

(ii) saving said survey data in said database, wherein said saving includes voice recognition processing of said oral responses of participant if said conducting of survey interview is performed by said IVR unit, wherein said voice recognition occurs at approximately real-time, and further wherein the voice recognition processed response is used to determine a next survey question;

(iii) transferring said communication system connection to a CATI unit if said participant requests such a transfer while the IVR unit is conducting said survey interview, wherein said CATI agent uses said CATI unit to continue said conducting a survey interview;

(iv) transferring said communication system connection to a CATI unit when said survey question procedure requires such a transfer, wherein

70 said CATI agent then conducts said
71 survey interview using said CATI
72 unit, and further wherein said CATI
73 agent can transfer said communication
74 system connection back to said IVR
75 unit to continue said survey
76 interview;

77 (v) monitoring said survey question
78 procedure status, wherein said status
79 information can be made available for
80 display;

81 (vi) terminating said conducting a survey
82 interview when said pre-determined
83 survey question procedure is complete
84 or when said participant requests
85 such termination;

1 27. (original) A process for collecting and
2 presenting survey information as in claim 26, further
3 comprising the steps of:

4 (I) processing said survey data, wherein said
5 processing converts said survey data collected
6 from a plurality of participants into survey
7 information, said processing comprising the
8 steps of:

9 (A) generating consumer satisfaction measures;

10 (B) generating employee rating measures;

11 (C) generating employer or organization rating
12 measures;

13 (F) generating quality assessment measures;
14 and

15 (G) analyzing said generated measures and
16 survey data;
17 and
18 (H) storing said survey information in said
19 database;
20 (II) providing a survey information consumer said
21 survey information, said providing further
22 comprising the steps of:
23 (A) connecting a survey information consumer
24 computer to a presenting system, wherein
25 said connecting is over a computer
26 network, said connecting comprising the
27 steps of:
28 (i) logging the consumer's computer into
29 the system, wherein the consumer
30 identity is verified; and
31 (iv) preventing the consumer not verified
32 from accessing said medical survey
33 information;
34 (B) presenting said survey information to said
35 consumers, said presenting comprising the
36 steps of:
37 (i) providing said consumers with options
38 for viewing aggregates of said survey
39 information;
40 (ii) providing said consumers with options
41 for viewing summaries of said survey
42 information;
43 (iii) providing said consumers with options
44 for viewing a subset of said survey
45 information;

46 (iii) providing said consumers with options
47 for viewing said survey data; and
48 (iv) formatting said presented information
49 for presenting by said consumer
50 computer, wherein said presenting can
51 be graphical, auditory, and textual;
52 (C) customizing said presented information to
53 the particular needs or access privileges
54 of the consumer, wherein some consumers
55 may have access to a subset of medical
56 information; and
57 (D) allowing the user to log off said system.
58 and
59 (III) evaluating said process for collecting and
60 presenting survey information, said evaluating
61 comprising:
62 (A) evaluating the performance of said CATI
63 agents; and
64 (B) evaluating the performance of said voice
65 recognition processing.

1 28. (currently amended) A process for collecting and
2 presenting medical survey information for a medical care
3 provider comprising the steps of:

4 (I) collecting survey data, said collecting
5 comprising the steps of
6 (A) selecting a participant from a list of
7 potential participants, wherein said
8 selecting is done according to specified
9 schedules;

10 (B) connecting said participant to a survey
11 communication system, said connecting
12 comprising the steps of:

13 (i) attempting to connect with said
14 participant via said survey
15 communication system, said attempting
16 including the steps of:

17 (a) initiating a survey
18 communication system connection;

19 (b) transferring said connection to
20 a CATI unit if said connection
21 is successful, wherein if said
22 connection is not successful,
23 selecting a new participant to
24 be said participant;

25 (c) requesting that said participant
26 agree to participate in a
27 survey, wherein said requesting
28 is performed by said CATI agent
29 using said CATI unit;

30 (d) requesting recall information
31 from said participant if said
32 participant has not agreed to
33 participate in said survey,
34 wherein said requesting is
35 performed by said CATI agent,
36 and further wherein said recall
37 information includes a request
38 to connect again at a different
39 time or using a different
40 communication system; and

41 (e) terminating said connection
42 after said requesting of recall
43 information if said participant
44 has not agreed to participate in
45 said survey;

46 (ii) requesting that said participant
47 agree to communicate with an IVR unit
48 for a survey interview; and

49 (iii) collecting call record information
50 comprising:

51 (a) overall connection attempts;
52 (b) connection attempts for each
53 participant contacted; and
54 (c) connection durations;

55 wherein said call record information is stored in a
56 database;

57 and

58 (C) conducting said survey interview, wherein
59 said conducting is performed by said IVR
60 unit if said participant agreed to
61 communicate with said IVR unit, and
62 further wherein said conducting is
63 performed by said CATI agent if
64 participant did not agree to communicate
65 with said IVR unit, said conducting said
66 survey interview comprising the steps of:

67 (i) asking survey questions of
68 participant using a pre-determined
69 survey question procedure utilizing
70 drill-down questioning, wherein said
71 survey questions provide sufficient

72 survey data to allow for the creation
73 of medical survey information; and
74 further wherein survey responses by
75 participant are done orally, and
76 still further wherein said survey
77 data optionally includes voice
78 interviews;

79 (ii) saving said survey data in said
80 database, wherein said saving
81 includes voice recognition processing
82 of said oral responses of said
83 participant if said conducting of
84 survey interview is performed by said
85 IVR unit, wherein said voice
86 recognition occurs at approximately
87 real-time, and further wherein the
88 voice recognition processed response
89 is used to determine a next survey
90 question;

91 (iii) transferring said communication
92 system connection to a CATI unit if
93 said participant requests such a
94 transfer while the IVR unit is
95 conducting said survey interview,
96 wherein said CATI agent uses said
97 CATI unit to continue said conducting
98 a survey interview;

99 (iv) transferring said communication
100 system connection to a CATI unit when
101 said survey question procedure
102 requires such a transfer, wherein
103 said CATI agent then conducts said
104 survey interview using said CATI

105 unit, and further wherein said CATI
106 agent can transfer said communication
107 system connection back to said IVR
108 unit to continue said survey
109 interview;

110 (v) monitoring said survey question
111 procedure status, wherein said status
112 information can be made available for
113 display;

114 (vi) terminating said conducting a survey
115 interview when said pre-determined
116 survey question procedure is complete
117 or when said participant requests
118 such termination;

119 (II) processing said survey data, wherein said
120 processing converts said survey data collected
121 from a plurality of participants into medical
122 survey information, said processing comprising
123 the steps of:

124 (A) generating consumer satisfaction measures
125 comprising:

126 (i) consumer loyalty measures;
127 (ii) medical care satisfaction measures;
128 (iii) medical facility satisfaction
129 measures;

130 (iv) medical staff satisfaction measures;
131 (v) positive comments with reasons; and
132 (vi) negative comments with reasons;

133 (B) generating staff rating measures
134 comprising:

135 (i) staff loyalty measures;

136 (ii) staff performance measures;
137 (iii) staff satisfaction measures; and
138 (iv) staff continuing education measures;
139 (C) generating doctor rating measures
140 comprising:
141 (i) quality of medical care measures;
142 (ii) doctor performance measures;
143 (ii) doctor satisfaction measures;
144 (iii) doctor loyalty measures; and
145 (iv) doctor continuing education measures;
146 (D) generating care delivery measures
147 comprising:
148 (i) cost measures including:
149 (a) cost of medical care paid by
150 consumer measures;
151 (b) cost of medical care paid by
152 non-consumer measures;
153 (c) cost of providing medical care
154 measures; and
155 (d) overhead costs measures;
156 and
157 (ii) profit measures;
158 (E) generating medical care quality assessment
159 measures comprising:
160 (i) mortality measures
161 (ii) morbidity measures;
162 (iii) complications measures;
163 (iv) medical procedure results measures;

164 (iv) medical procedure follow-up measures;
165 (vi) patient mental health measures;
166 (vii) social impact measures;
167 (viii) hospital stay length measures;
168 (ix) HEDIS[®] technical quality measures;
169 and
170 (x) per member per month (PM PM) cost
171 measures;
172 (F) analyzing said generated measures and
173 survey data, said analyzing comprising the
174 steps of:
175 (i) aggregating survey data to form
176 assessments;
177 (ii) normalizing comparisons between
178 specific named units, said named
179 units including:
180 (a) doctors or specialists;
181 (b) medical care organizations or
182 divisions;
183 (c) staff persons;
184 (d) managers;
185 (e) specific medical treatments; and
186 (f) patient group status;
187 (iii) determining changes over time;
188 (iv) determining differences
189 geographically; and
190 (v) generating summaries;
191 and

192 (G) storing said medical survey information in
193 said database;

194 (III) providing a medical survey information
195 consumer said medical survey information, said
196 providing further comprising the steps of:

197 (A) connecting a medical survey information
198 consumer computer to a presenting system,
199 wherein said connecting is over a computer
200 network, said connecting comprising the
201 steps of:

202 (i) logging in the consumer computer to
203 the system, said login comprising the
204 steps of:

205 (a) processing a consumer login
206 request, said login request
207 comprising the steps of:

208 (1) providing said consumer
209 with a login prompt;

210 (2) accepting a consumer login
211 input, said login input
212 comprising:

213 a user ID; and
214 a user password;

215 and

216 (b) processing the consumer login input, said
217 processing comprising the steps of:

218 comparing said user ID against a verified
219 consumer list, wherein if said user ID is
220 verified, then:

221 verifying said user password by comparing said
222 password to a stored password

223 corresponding to said user ID, if said
224 user password is verified then:
225 permitting consumer access to the system;
226 and
227 ~~(iv)~~ preventing the consumer not logged in
228 from accessing said medical survey
229 information;
230 (B) presenting said medical survey information
231 to said consumers, said presenting
232 comprising the steps of:
233 (i) providing said consumers with options
234 for viewing aggregates of said
235 medical survey information;
236 (ii) providing said consumers with options
237 for viewing summaries of said medical
238 survey information;
239 (iii) providing said consumers with options
240 for viewing a subset of said medical
241 survey information;
242 (iii) providing said consumers with options
243 for viewing said medical survey data;
244 and
245 (iv) formatting said presented information
246 for presenting by said consumer
247 computer, said presenting including:
248 graphical display;
249 auditory presentment; and
250 textual display;
251 (C) customizing said presented information to
252 the particular needs or access privileges

253 of the consumer, wherein some consumers
254 may have access to a subset of medical
255 information; and
256 (D) allowing the user to log off said system.
257 and
258 (IV) evaluating said process for collecting and
259 presenting medical survey information, said
260 evaluating comprising:
261 (A) evaluating the performance of said CATI
262 agents; and
263 (B) evaluating the performance of said voice
264 recognition processing.

1 29. (original) A process for collecting and
2 presenting medical survey information for a medical care
3 provider as in claim 25, wherein said participant is
4 selected from the group of doctors, medical staff,
5 medical patients, a family member of a medical patient,
6 and a medical care employer; and further wherein said
7 participant gave or received services from said medical
8 care provider.